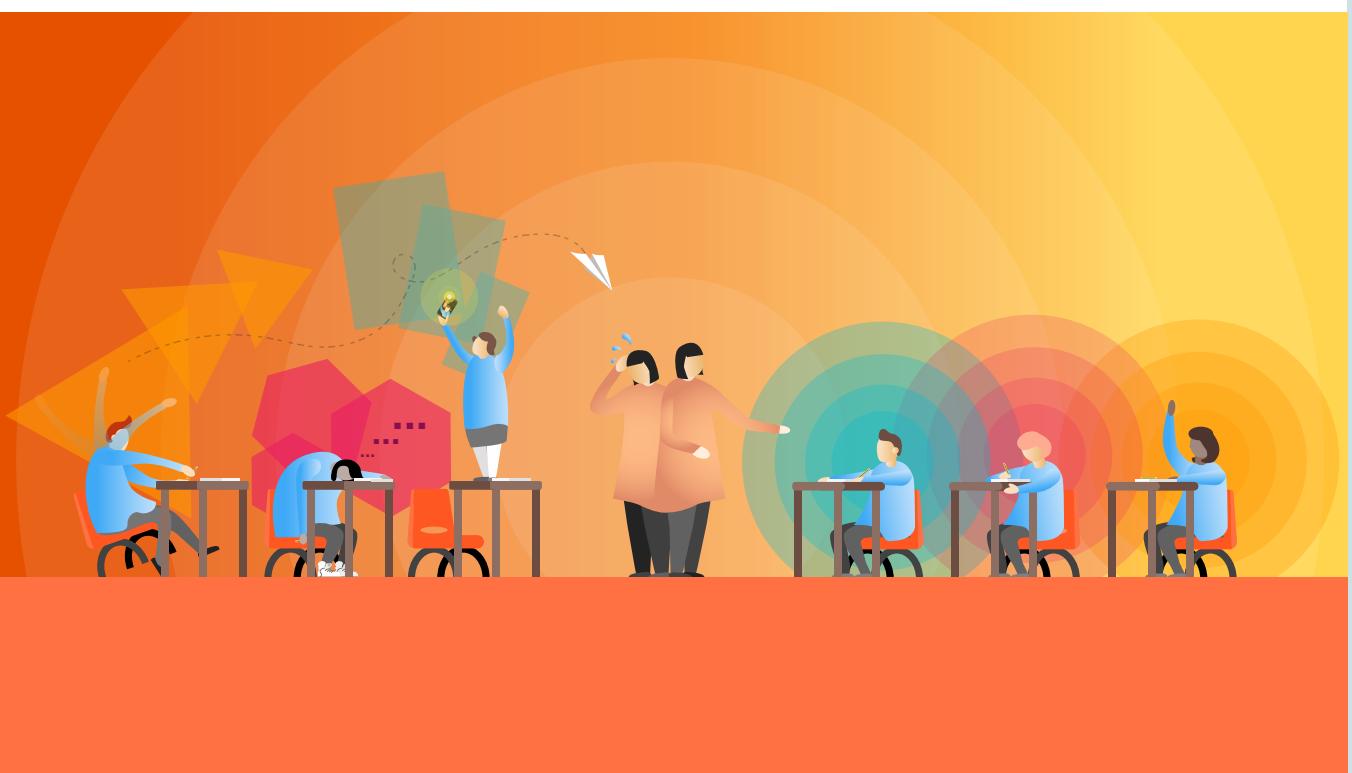


# IMPROVING BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS

## Guidance Report



Education  
Endowment  
Foundation

We would like to thank the many researchers and practitioners who provided support and feedback on drafts of this guidance. We would particularly like to thank the Advisory Panel and Evidence Review Team:

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# FOREWORD



Misbehaviour in lessons is something that has been documented by teachers for centuries. And while most pupils in most lessons are well-behaved, it's a major cause of stress for teachers and can have a lasting impact on the outcomes of the pupils in the class. There's a clear need for school to have consistent and clear behaviour policies that promote positive behaviour in lessons.

This EEF guidance report is designed to support senior leaders in primary and secondary schools to make better-informed decisions about their behaviour strategies. It includes a number of practical examples of programmes and approaches that should be helpful in schools and classrooms where behaviour is generally good as well as where there are problems.

The recommendations in this report focus on three areas:

The first details strategies to prevent misbehaviour happening. A key theme from these recommendations is the importance of knowing individual pupils well, so that schools and teachers know which factors might affect pupil behaviour and what the school can do to address these. Focusing on developing good relationships also ensures pupils feel valued and supported, meaning they are less likely to misbehave. It is also good that many simple approaches that don't take much time or money to implement—like providing breakfast clubs, or greeting pupils individually before a lesson—can have a really positive impact on behaviour.

The second focuses on how to deal with bad behaviour

when it happens. A key message is that schools should use personalised approaches—like daily report cards—to

address 'problem pupils', rather than universal systems. It recommends that teachers are trained in specific strategies if they're dealing with pupils with high behaviour needs.

The third focuses on the importance of consistency and coherence when it comes to behaviour policies. This means that once senior leaders have considered the rationale for putting a new behaviour strategy or approach to work, they need to spend time and care embedding it across the entire school.

To develop this report's six recommendations for improving behaviour we not only reviewed the best available international research, but also consulted with teachers and other experts.

As with all EEF guidance reports, its publication is just the start of how we aim to support schools in implementing these recommendations. We will now be working with the sector, including through our colleagues in the Research Schools Network, to build on them with further training, resources and tools. This report is well-timed for school leaders to consider alongside the recent Timpson report on exclusions, and to be part of professional conversations around behaviour that will be central to the Department for Education's Behaviour Support Networks.

And, as ever, we will be looking to support and test the most promising programmes that put the lessons from the research into practice. Our hope is that this guidance will help to support a consistently excellent, evidence-informed education system in England that creates great opportunities for all children and young people, regardless of their family background.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevan Collins'.

Sir Kevan Collins

Chief Executive  
Education Endowment Foundation

# INTRODUCTION

## Who is the guidance for?

This guidance is applicable to primary and secondary school settings. It is hoped that most of the guidance will be useful for class teachers, while all should be relevant to senior leaders who are considering school behaviour policies and approaches. Further audiences who may find the guidance relevant include other school staff, governors, parents, policymakers, and educational researchers. Some elements will also be applicable to those in Early Years settings, though they are not the main audience and the evidence literature consulted was for those aged 4-18.

## What does this guidance cover?

The strategies outlined should be helpful in schools and classrooms where behaviour is generally good as well as where there are problems. ‘Behaviour’, throughout this report, is taken to mean the whole range of ways pupils can act in school, including disruptive or aggressive behaviours, prosocial behaviours, and learning behaviours (which are explained further in Recommendation 2). This guidance aims to help schools to support their pupils with the entire range of behaviours they may encounter.

## Acting on this guidance

Major decisions about your school’s approach to behaviour are likely to be most effective if made in conjunction with a range of stakeholders including teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, and parents. To maximise its impact, this report should be read in conjunction with other EEF guidance including [\*Putting Evidence to Work: A School’s Guide to Implementation\*](#).

Schools may also want to seek support from our national network of Research Schools—a collaboration between the EEF, the Institute for Effective Education, and the Department for Education. Research Schools aim to lead the way in the use of evidence-based teaching, building affiliations with large numbers of schools in their region, and supporting the use of evidence at scale.

# INTRODUCTION

*Children began to be the tyrants, not the slaves, of their households. They no longer rose from their seats when an elder entered the room; they contradicted their parents, chattered before company, gobbled up the dainties at table, and committed various offences against Hellenic tastes, such as crossing their legs. They tyrannised over the paidagogoi and schoolmasters.<sup>1</sup>*

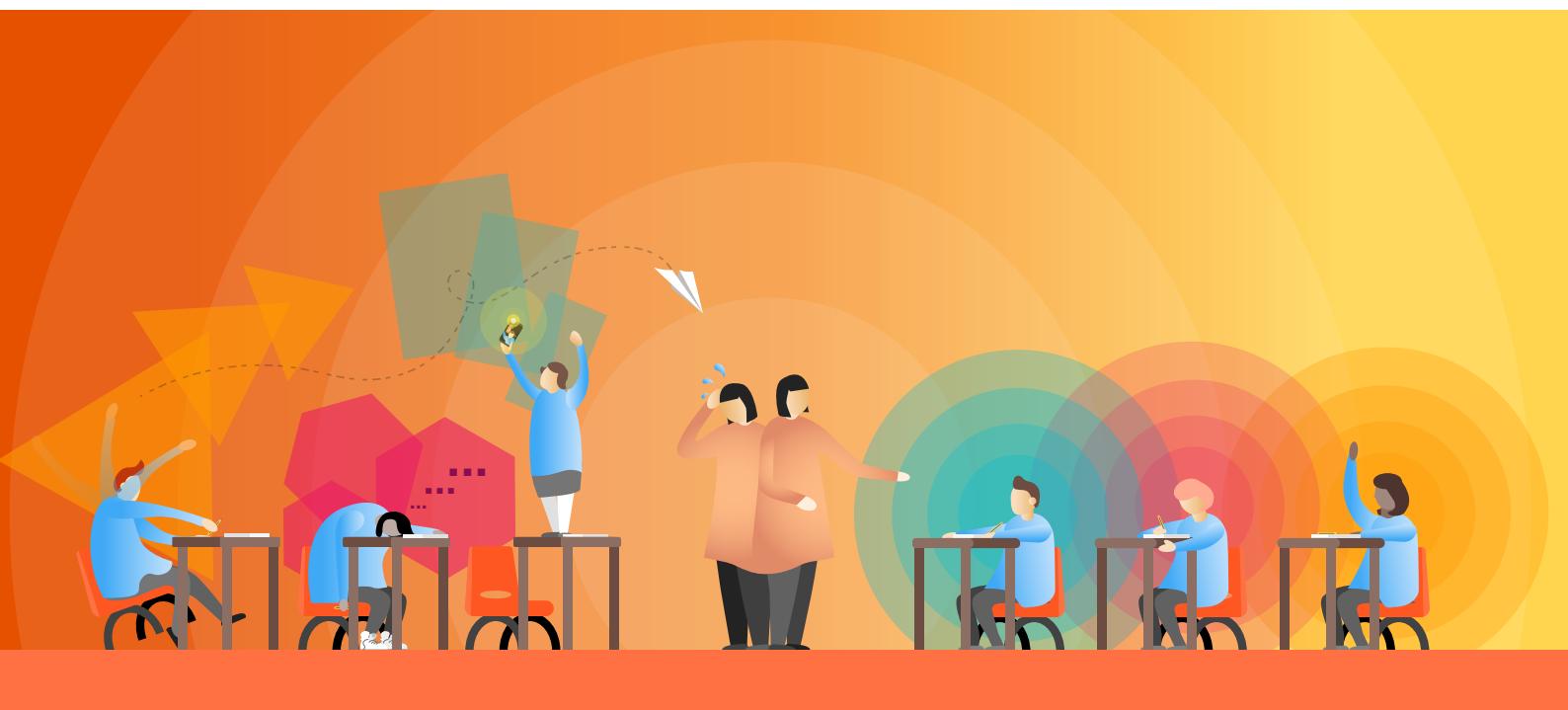
**Kenneth John Freeman, paraphrasing Hellenic perceptions of the youth in 600–300 BC**

There is much research on the ramifications of poor pupil behaviour on the school learning environment. It is one of the most difficult tasks that both experienced and new teachers have to contend with in schools<sup>2</sup> and one of the perennial issues that affects teacher retention.<sup>3</sup> However, while behaviour is a significant issue affecting teachers in many schools, most pupils in most lessons behave well. As for classroom and school behaviour worsening over time, it has been common since ancient times to perceive the younger generation as behaving worse than their predecessors, but teacher voice surveys show that the proportion of teachers saying behaviour at their school is good or better has

been fairly stable at 70-76% over the last 10 years<sup>4</sup>: the problem is significant but not spiralling out of control.

Ofsted data provides an enlightening starting point for school leaders aiming to improve behaviour in their school:

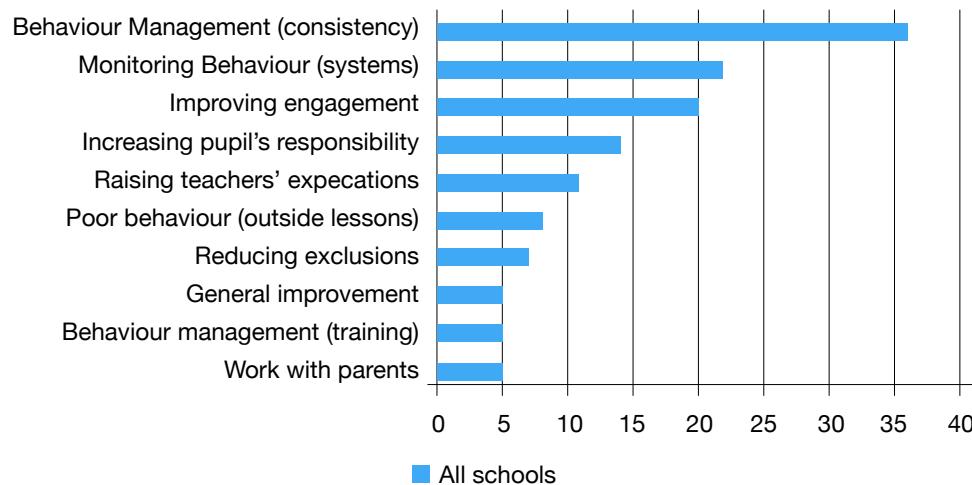
- Even in schools where behaviour is judged by Ofsted to be inadequate overall, the behaviour in most classrooms is rated more highly.
- The main area for improvement when addressing behaviour is most often *consistency*.



# INTRODUCTION

**Figure 1: Analysis of areas for improvement relating to behaviour in 95 schools inspected between January and March 2014 (From the Ofsted report '*Below the Radar*')<sup>5</sup>**

## Main areas for improvement linked to behaviour and safety



*Inconsistency in how behaviour was dealt with across different classes was prevalent in over a third of the Ofsted reports on the 95 schools studied.*

*Section 6 of this guidance focuses on implementation: using the strengths within the existing staff team and ensuring pupils hear the same message from all staff is likely to enhance the effectiveness of any behaviour policy.*

This report has three sections. The first details **proactive strategies** that can be deployed at classroom level to reduce the chance of misbehaviour occurring: a school-wide focus on these strategies should reduce efforts expended reacting to poor behaviour. Next, the guidance covers **reactive strategies** for supporting pupils to improve their

behaviour when they have misbehaved or have a chronic issue with their behaviour in school. Finally, the guidance covers **implementation**. Implementing approaches to behaviour strategically and consistently is likely to be more important than the choice of approach itself, and the impact of any good strategy can be enhanced by getting this right.

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

## Proactive

### 1

Know and understand your pupils and their influences

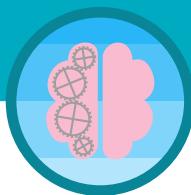


- Pupil behaviour has multiple influences, some of which teachers can manage directly
- Understanding a pupil's context will inform effective responses to misbehaviour
- Every pupil should have a supportive relationship with a member of school staff

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### 2

Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour

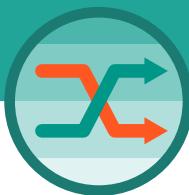


- Teaching learning behaviours will reduce the need to manage misbehaviour
- Teachers can provide the conditions for learning behaviours to develop by ensuring pupils can access the curriculum, engage with lesson content and participate in their learning
- Teachers should encourage pupils to be self-reflective of their own behaviours

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### 3

Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour



- Effective classroom management can reduce challenging behaviour, pupil disengagement, bullying and aggression
- Improving classroom management usually involves intensive training with teachers reflecting on their classroom management, trying a new approach and reviewing their progress over time
- Reward systems based on pupils gaining rewards can be effective when part of a broader classroom management strategy

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## Implementation

### 6

Consistency is key



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- Consistency and coherence at a whole-school level are paramount
- Whole-school changes usually take longer to embed than individually tailored or single-classroom approaches
- However, behaviour programmes are more likely to have an impact on attainment outcomes if implemented at a whole-school level

# 4

Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine



- Some strategies that don't require complex pedagogical changes have been shown to be promising
- Breakfast clubs, use of specific behaviour-related praise and working with parents can all support good behaviour
- School leaders should ensure the school behaviour policy is clear and consistently applied

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# Reactive

# 5

Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school



- Universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all your students
- For pupils with more challenging behaviour, the approach should be adapted to individual needs
- Teachers should be trained in specific strategies if supporting pupils with high behaviour needs

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Sections are colour coded for ease of reference

# 1 Know and understand your pupils and their influences



*'A multitude of interrelated factors influence each child's developmental course and academic growth.'*<sup>6</sup>

Chodkiewicz and Boyle (2017)

## Good relationships matter

Supportive relationships are a key motivation for teachers joining the profession,<sup>7</sup> and happily, both teacher and pupil surveys show that teachers usually have positive relationships with students. Research suggests that teachers knowing their students well can have a positive impact on classroom behaviour.<sup>8</sup> In settings where multiple adults frequently work with individual pupils, effective communication between those key adults is important. Information needs to be sought and willingly shared by pupils and parents. Understanding pupils better can be more effective than relying on a default response (see Box 1).

## How can we get to know our pupils?

Consider your school context and the system that would work for you. *Is it possible to structure your school such that someone knows each pupil, their strengths and interests? Can this be managed for some pupils, if not all?* In primary schools and special schools, the class teacher may be able to provide this role. In secondary schools, an existing pastoral system might be a good place to start to proactively support your pupils to respond well to influences in and out of school that could affect their behaviour. At the teacher level, regularly and intentionally focusing small amounts of time working on relationships with individual pupils can have a big impact. This could be as simple as asking about their weekend or how their football team is performing.

### Box 1: Default responses\*

Two children are disruptive in a classroom this morning:

Pupil 1 feels he is lacking attention from the teacher and wants this even if it is negative;

Pupil 2 wants to escape the classroom as she is bored, so acts up to get removed.

*If the teacher's default is to send out the child, this would reinforce Pupil 2's unhelpful behaviour, whereas for Pupil 1, this strategy could dissuade the behaviour. Reprimanding the child in class could reorient Pupil 2 but would reinforce Pupil 1's misbehaviour.*

\*With thanks to Louise Denne University of Warwick, for the example.

## Consider the things that might affect pupil behaviour and what the school can do to address these

There are many factors that can explain pupil behaviour in schools. Figure 2 highlights the interactions between positive and negative influences over behaviour and illustrates how pupils will move between quadrants depending on the influence of life and educational events. By becoming aware of events before their effect becomes extreme, there is more chance of mitigating any negative change and of being able to keep the pupil in positive zones, both in terms of overall school behaviour and overall influences. When the school becomes aware of a negative change in circumstance, they could act to increase the number of positive influences or reduce the negative, perhaps through counselling. If behaviour deteriorates, they will be in a better position to counteract the negative influence with an appropriate positive intervention.

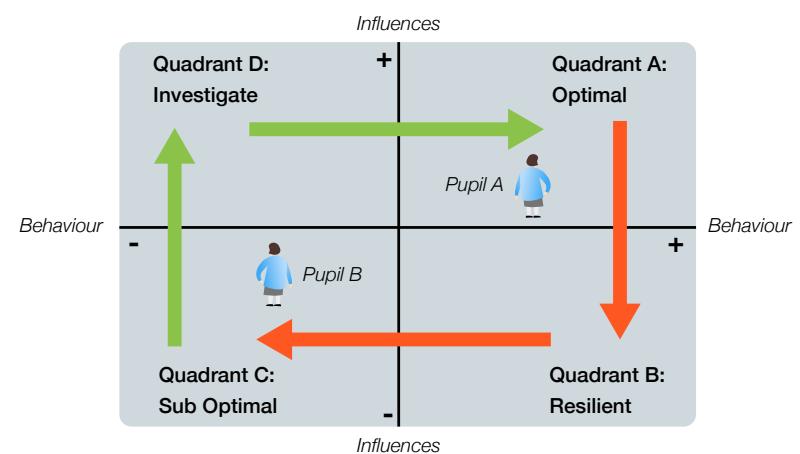
Consider, for example, Pupil A in Year 8 who has experienced the death of a close relative. The pupil begins in Quadrant A (the optimal position). However, the bereavement is understandably a negative influence on behaviour and the pupil may gradually move through the quadrants (first to bottom right and then bottom left). These changes may be subtle but over time they can have a substantial effect on the pupil's wellbeing or curricular development.

Or consider the example of Pupil B, a Year 10 pupil who has been disrupting lessons and walking out of class. Investigating this behaviour, the school staff team becomes aware that she has not made solid friendships so has low social confidence since moving to the school the previous term. Alongside implementing the sanctions in the school's behaviour policy, school staff focus on improving the influences on Pupil B's behaviour. An informal meeting with her

form tutor reveals that she is a talented musician, so she is encouraged to join the school band where she makes more friends. She is also encouraged to have regular conversations with her in-school mentor. As her influences in school improve, Pupil B becomes more aware of her own behaviours as well as being positively influenced by the friends and mentor she has grown close to; she adjusts her behaviour positively without much disciplinary action being taken.<sup>9</sup>

Being in an informed position where staff can be aware of negative influences starting or continuing to affect a pupil's life is key to building understanding and to identifying the most effective behaviour management approach.

**Figure 2: The link between positive and negative school behaviour and influences**



## Box 2: The Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) method

A good way to build positive relationships with pupils is the EMR method, which has promising results from a small study. Summarised below, it involves focusing intentionally on the pupils who it is most difficult to connect with, who may be most in need of a consistent, positive relationship. It is recommended that this technique should take no longer than 30 minutes per week and can be completed during periods the adult already spends with pupils, representing an efficient use of time.

	Establish	Maintain	Restore (R <sup>3</sup> )
<b>Definition</b>	<i>Intentional practices to cultivate a positive relationship with each student (i.e. build trust, connection &amp; understanding)</i>	<i>Proactive efforts to prevent relationship quality from diminishing over time (i.e. ongoing positive interactions)</i>	<i>Intentionally repairing harm to the relationship after a negative interaction (i.e. reconnecting with student)</i>
<b>Practical strategies</b>	Set aside window of time to spend with student Inquire about student's interests Communicate positively: Open ended questions Affirmations Reflexive listening Validation Reference student info Deliver constructive feedback wisely	5-to-1 ratio of positive to negative interactions Positive notes home Greet students at the door Relationship check-in Random, special activities	R <sup>3</sup> = Reconnect, Repair, Restore Take responsibility for negative interaction Deliver an empathy statement Let go of the previous incident & start fresh Communicate your care for having the student Engaging in mutual problem solving

There are influences on behaviour which teaching staff can affect directly, others where there is a potential for teaching staff to influence or advise, and a third category where influences may be outside the purview of teaching staff.

Challenging experiences for pupils at home or in the community may negatively affect their ability to learn or cope with the school environment, which could lead to a withdrawal from learning.<sup>10</sup> In some cases, this can lead to the void being filled with negative behaviour, which is sometimes linked to maintaining self-esteem and social standing with peers. This

can become more pronounced in the later primary and secondary years where the social skills aspect becomes more valuable.<sup>11</sup>

Table 1 outlines in-school influences that the Department for Education has identified as affecting pupil mental health. These could play a major role in behaviour presenting in the classroom. Considering both the influences and the extent to which the school can influence them should lead to a more effective choice of strategies when considering how to create policies and individual response plans for positive and negative behaviours in school.

**Table 1: Factors affecting mental health in schools<sup>12</sup>**

Risk Factors	Protective factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying including online (cyber)</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships</li> <li>• Deviant peer influences</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Peer on peer abuse</li> <li>• Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear policies on behaviour and bullying</li> <li>• Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct)</li> <li>• 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems</li> <li>• A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health</li> <li>• Good pupil to teacher/school staff relationships</li> <li>• Positive classroom management</li> <li>• A sense of belonging</li> <li>• Positive peer influences</li> <li>• Positive friendships</li> <li>• Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies</li> <li>• An effective early help process</li> <li>• Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working</li> <li>• Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively</li> </ul>

### Box 3: A social network experiment

In 2016, researchers in America carried out an experiment to find an effective way to reduce bullying in middle schools—pupils 11–16 years old—using social norms (see Blakemore, 2018, referenced below). Pupils were encouraged to start a grassroots campaign against bullying, designing posters to be displayed around school with their own name and photo on or handing out orange wristbands to other students who were engaging in friendly behaviours as a visible reward for action against bullying; 2,500 wristbands were given out and tracked during the study.

In the schools that implemented the anti-bullying campaign, reports of student conflict reduced by 30% compared to a control group. Researchers also asked pupils at the beginning of the programme to name whom they had chosen to spend time with over the last week; they found stronger effects in schools where ‘highly connected’ students (those whom more people had chosen to spend time with) were chosen for the anti-bullying programme.

*This experiment fits with our understanding of adolescent motivation: many teenagers are influenced by their peer networks and motivated by social justice. These levers can be more powerful than the risk of negative consequences (such as an anti-bullying sanction).*

While every person’s behaviour and their motivations for it are complex and unique, the age of your pupils, or their actual stage of development, can affect their behaviour in ways that are predictable.

Adolescence—most broadly defined as 10–25 years old—is a significant time for brain development associated with developing a stronger, more

independent, and more fixed sense of self. During the teenage years, peer influence is more important than at any other age. Social pressure (real or imagined) contributes to increased risk-taking behaviour at this age and can also lead to risk aversion, such as a sudden reluctance to answer questions in class. It is common to be acutely self-conscious, particularly in early adolescence (11–14).

## Negative experiences that might influence behaviour

There is a growing body of research identifying the harmful effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the rest of a person's life. ACEs are significant stressful events occurring during childhood or adolescence and can be direct, such as the child suffering abuse or neglect, or indirect, such as the child's parent suffering mental illness or drug addiction. The research suggests that ACEs have a strong link with chronic diseases, social and emotional issues, with a higher ACE score correlating with worse outcomes on all fronts. Two thirds of people have at least one ACE, but the 8% of people in England who have four or more ACEs are at an increased risk of a range of negative health outcomes

such as heart disease, respiratory disease, drug addiction, or self-harm.<sup>13</sup>

ACEs can be a helpful way of understanding how services can be tailored towards individuals. This research is in its early stages even within healthcare, but as the terminology is becoming more prevalent in schools, some are beginning to use ACEs as a framework to understand their pupils. Knowing about any trauma a pupil has experienced or is experiencing can inform support a school provides. See Recommendation 5 (description of St Mary's) for an example of how one school is using this theory as part of their tailored support for pupils in relation to their behaviour.

## Bullying

A key influence on a child's behaviour in school is being the victim of bullying. As well as causing stress for the pupil, being bullied is linked to lower attainment outcomes.<sup>14</sup> School approaches to prevent and respond to bullying are likely to involve establishing and maintaining high quality behaviour management throughout the whole school with support from parents and other stakeholders.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis of anti-bullying programmes produced by the Campbell

Collaboration in 2009, the authors Ttofi and Farrington reviewed 53 school initiatives and pulled out effective programmes and programme features.<sup>15</sup> They found that anti-bullying programmes were often effective at reducing bullying, with an average reduction in bullying of 20-23% after implementing a programme.

Successful programmes tended to be more intensive and implemented over an extended period, containing the following elements:

- **Whole-school anti-bullying policy**
- **Classroom rules:** often set collaboratively by the class
- **School conferences:** assemblies to introduce the initiative and inform pupils about bullying
- **Cooperative group work:** school staff cooperating to work with bullies and victims of bullying
- **Information for parents:** this could include a manual to structure a teacher's conversation or a leaflet for parents to digest at home
- **Improved playground supervision**
- **Classroom management:** see *recommendation 3*
- **Disciplinary methods:** punitive measures such as being sent to the headteacher or being deprived of privileges
- **Teacher training:** training taking place over more than 4 days and lasting 10 hours or more was most effective
- **Parent training/meetings:** educational events for parents relating specifically to bullying



## Where's the evidence?



Evidence from psychology demonstrates a clear development pattern that affects behaviour in children and young people, which can support teacher understanding.

Research on ACEs demonstrates that being exposed to four or more significant adverse experiences tends to affect children and teenagers' behaviour as well as their physical and mental health, both immediately and throughout their lives. This is a relatively new field of research and it appears that interventions can reduce the harmful effects, but more research is needed to understand the most useful ways of applying this knowledge to support children and young people in schools.

There is a strong evidence base that teacher-pupil relationships are key to good pupil behaviour and that these relationships can affect pupil effort and academic attainment.

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### First stop for further reading:

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore (2018) '*Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain*'.

Neuroscientist Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore explains the changes in the brain during adolescence and relates this to behaviour in children, teenagers, and young adults in an accessible and enlightening manner.

Children's Commissioner (2012) '*Practical Tips for Schools: outstanding safeguarding practice in primary schools*'.

[https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/15496/2/Practical\\_Tips\\_You\\_Have\\_Someone\\_to\\_Trust\\_Final\\_Sept\\_2012%5B1%5D.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/15496/2/Practical_Tips_You_Have_Someone_to_Trust_Final_Sept_2012%5B1%5D.pdf)

This safeguarding advice includes a large section on encouraging children to feel that school is a place they can talk about any concerns they have.

John Norlin (May 1st 2018) '*3 Steps to Strengthen Relationships in Your Classroom*'.

<https://www.characterstrong.com/blog/establishmaintainrestore>

This blog describes in more detail the rationale behind, and practical application of, the Establish-Maintain-Restore approach outlined above.



*'The successful management of behaviour relies on far more than a set of strategies to draw upon when pupils misbehave'*<sup>16</sup>

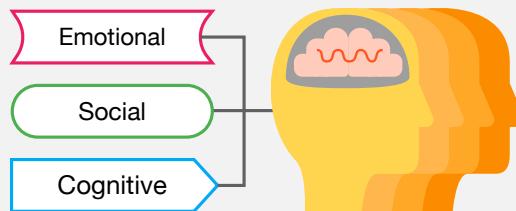
Ellis and Tod (2018)

Teachers want their pupils to learn yet report disruptive behaviours as preventing this. In a recent *Teacher Tapp* survey, 28% of primary and 31% of secondary teachers said that in their last lesson, teaching and learning had largely stopped because of poor behaviour.<sup>17</sup> Teachers often have a plethora of techniques in their repertoires to manage misbehaviour and low-level disruption within their classroom. However, whilst it is impossible

to eradicate all misbehaviour, it can certainly be minimised and the general climate for learning can be improved through the **explicit teaching of learning behaviours**, reducing the need for teachers to constantly 'manage' misbehaviour.<sup>18</sup> A learning behaviour is any behaviour that supports learning, such as paying attention to the teacher or persevering with a difficult task.

### The importance of teaching learning behaviours

'A **learning behaviour** can be thought of as a behaviour that is necessary in order for a person to learn effectively in the group setting of the classroom.'<sup>19</sup>



Managing a child's misbehaviour does not necessarily lead to that child learning: they may be quieter, but not necessarily engaging with the content of the lesson. Instead, research suggests that when children improve their learning behaviours, this skill set can improve both academic achievement and cognitive ability.<sup>20</sup>

Pupils who are aware of their own behaviour, who can self-regulate and deploy coping skills, will be less likely to misbehave in school. Once such strategies have been developed and strengthened, they turn into essential life skills and help students to become motivated and determined to succeed. Behaviour-for-learning approaches can be supported by the evidence on social and emotional learning, self-regulation, and essential life skills.

### What are the learning behaviours that we should focus on?

Although much of the research available focuses on evaluating specific interventions or outcomes,<sup>21</sup> Ellis and Tod's recent review of the literature provides a conceptual framework for teachers to use to evaluate approaches to managing misbehaviour and to teach behaviour for learning.

The model (see Figure 3) suggests that each of three pupil relationships – with themselves, with others

and with the curriculum - impacts on the other, and positive change can be achieved by recognising which of these relationships needs to be developed or strengthened with specific teaching. This could be for the whole class, for a small group, or on an individual basis.

In Recommendation 1 we explored the possible factors that influence pupil behaviour and the extent

to which schools can affect these. The framework suggests that learning behaviours fall within the realm of the school's—and even the individual teacher's— influence and thus warrant more attention from school practitioners.

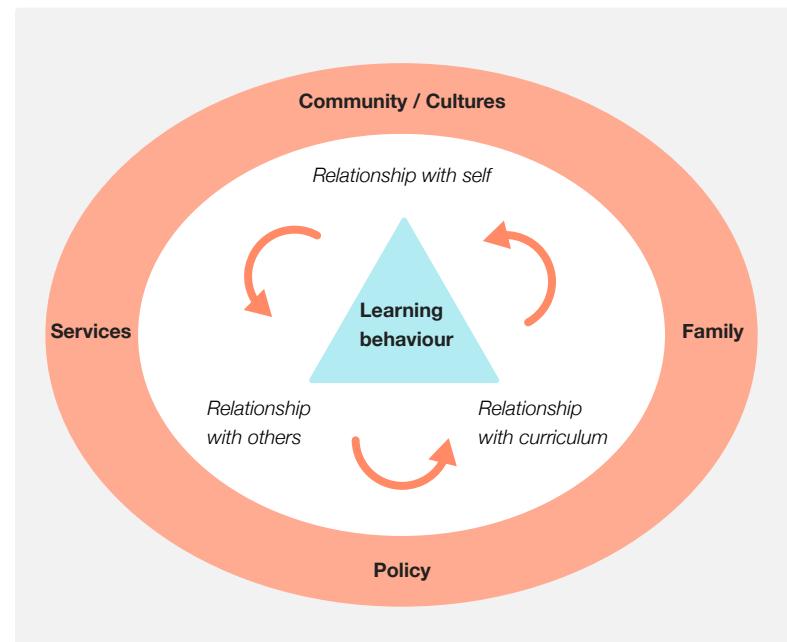
Ellis and Tod's model is adapted from a previous framework from Powell and Tod in 2004<sup>22</sup>, shown in Figure 3. In this model, a single learning behaviour (from those detailed below) is placed at the centre of the model. The triangle surrounding this behaviour is the 'triangle of influence' representing the behaviour being influenced by emotional, social, and cognitive factors. These factors and the learning behaviour itself can be addressed through the three relationships (with self, others, and the curriculum) experienced by the individual in the classroom.

Changing a learning behaviour is a dynamic process with reciprocal influences, as represented by the arrows. The circle, and terms inside this, show the influence of context.

For example, if *dealing with setbacks* was placed in the middle of the triangle, although this is a mostly emotional learning behaviour, it will be influenced by social and cognitive factors—perhaps being embarrassed in front of peers (a social factor) is often a reason the pupil wants to give up, and limited experience of success is influencing the want to give up more quickly. A teacher hoping to improve this pupil's responses to setbacks could respond by:

- **increasing engagement (relationship with self)**—discussing a time the pupil has given up when experiencing a setback and challenging them to stick with the next task, listening to any concerns the pupil has about being able to achieve or issues with self-motivation;
- **improving access (relationship with curriculum)**—ensuring the pupil has appropriately levelled work that will lead to the experience of success as long as they stick with it; praising the pupil for achieving and highlighting that their perseverance got them through it; and

**Figure 3: The behaviour or learning conceptual framework adapted from Powell and Tod 2004.**



- **ensuring participation (relationship with others)**—set a classroom culture where pupils are proud to say they found a task difficult at first and are not afraid to get things wrong.

A range of learning behaviours is outlined below though there may be other terms and concepts you already use that suit your own school context better.

- **Emotional learning behaviours:** inner voice, mental well-being, dealing with setbacks; and self-esteem, self-worth, and self-competence.
- **Social learning behaviours:** pupil relationship with teacher, pupil relationship with peers, collaborative learning, and bullying.
- **Cognitive learning behaviours:** motivation, growth mindset, working memory/cognitive load, and communication—improving through effective teacher-pupil dialogue, modelling.

#### Box 4: Motivation

Extrinsic motivation—in the form of external influences such as gaining rewards and praise—is useful to address some minor misbehaviours or to encourage positive behaviour. Teachers can use tangible techniques such as rewards and sanctions, or less tangible strategies such as praise and criticism, to improve motivation, behaviour, and learning. However, it is intrinsic motivation, or self-motivation, that is crucial to improving resilience, achieving goals, and ultimately is the key determiner to success. Children who are intrinsically motivated achieve better and are less likely to misbehave.

Carol Dweck's research on 'growth mindset'—the theory that intelligence is not a fixed characteristic but can instead be increased through effort—suggests that teaching students to have this mindset can motivate children not only to improve academically but also to behave better.<sup>23</sup> In her book, Dweck also discusses how teaching children skills such as collaboration and self-improvement can reduce bullying and empower bystanders to stand up to bullying that may be taking place.<sup>24</sup>

Encouraging a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset involves, as a teacher:

- having a growth mindset yourself—truly believe that all your students will achieve and improve;
- praising a students' effort rather than the person, the end piece of work or results ('You have worked so hard on this'; 'You're persevering brilliantly through tough new concepts'); and
- avoiding fixed mindset labelling that praises intelligence or talent ('You're so clever'; 'You're so talented').

Intrinsic motivation approaches are rooted in cognitive psychology but are challenging to implement impactfully in schools. With growth mindset in particular, it has become very popular for schools to promote a growth mindset but study results have been mixed. Dweck herself has warned that mindset approaches are difficult to implement:

"It's really hard to pass a growth mindset on to others and create a growth mindset culture. It's not about educators giving a mindset lecture or putting up a poster – it's about embodying it in all their practices."

School leaders should be aware that light-touch training in a growth mindset approach is unlikely to be effective on its own: this strategy requires careful consideration.



## Where's the evidence?

Several high-quality studies suggest that a shift of focus from managing a child's behaviour towards teaching a child learning behaviours may be beneficial. This research evidence fits with the message from the 2005 report from The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline led by Sir Alan Steer, "Learning Behaviour".

The body of evidence relating specifically to self-regulation is covered more thoroughly in the EEF's Guidance Report, 'Metacognition and self-regulated learning'.

### First stop for further reading

Elton (1989) 'Discipline in Schools', London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/elton/elton1989.html>

On classroom environment, the Elton Report provides checklists of strategies to manage and avoid misbehaviour in lessons. The focus is mostly on classroom environment; get this right and you are less likely to have children misbehave.

Ellis and Tod (2018) 'Behaviour for Learning: Promoting Positive Relationships in the Classroom'.

Ellis and Tod provide a conceptual framework for schools and teachers to critically evaluate different approaches to managing behaviour and how to implement a behaviour-for-learning approach.

Guy Claxton (2018) 'The Learning Power Approach: Teaching learners to teach themselves'.

Claxton's recent book distils learning from his experience and new research since the launch of his Building Learning Power approach 15 years ago, outlining how learning behaviours can enhance learning outcomes.

Carl Hendrick (2019), 'The Growth Mindset Problem'.

<https://aeon.co/essays/schools-love-the-idea-of-a-growth-mindset-but-does-it-work>

In this essay, published by Aeon, teacher and researcher Carl Hendrick discusses the evidence on growth mindset and the difficulties in replicating positive lab-based outcomes in schools.

# 3 Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour



*'Pupils are potentially losing up to **an hour of learning each day** in English schools because of ... disruption in classrooms. This is equivalent to **38 days of teaching** lost per year.<sup>25</sup>*

**Ofsted, 2014**

Classroom management is a major concern for teachers, often leading to stress, burnout, and exit from the profession as well as being a deterrent for those considering teaching as a career.<sup>26</sup> It is cited as a challenge for headteachers across all school phases.<sup>27</sup>

Effective classroom management can reduce challenging behaviour, pupil disengagement, bullying, and aggression, leading to improved classroom

climate, attendance, and attainment.<sup>28</sup> While attendance at school and bullying are not wholly the preserve of schools,<sup>29</sup> schools have a role to play. This is of particular concern as in 2019, '*... both authorised and unauthorised absence rates have increased since last year, the rate of the latter now being the highest since records began.*'<sup>30</sup> Increasing school absence or being bullied are linked to lower attainment outcomes.<sup>31</sup>

## Training for classroom management

Evidence suggests that effective training for building classroom management expertise involves teachers or school staff:

- Reflecting on their own approach;
- Trying a new approach; and
- Reviewing progress over time.<sup>32</sup>

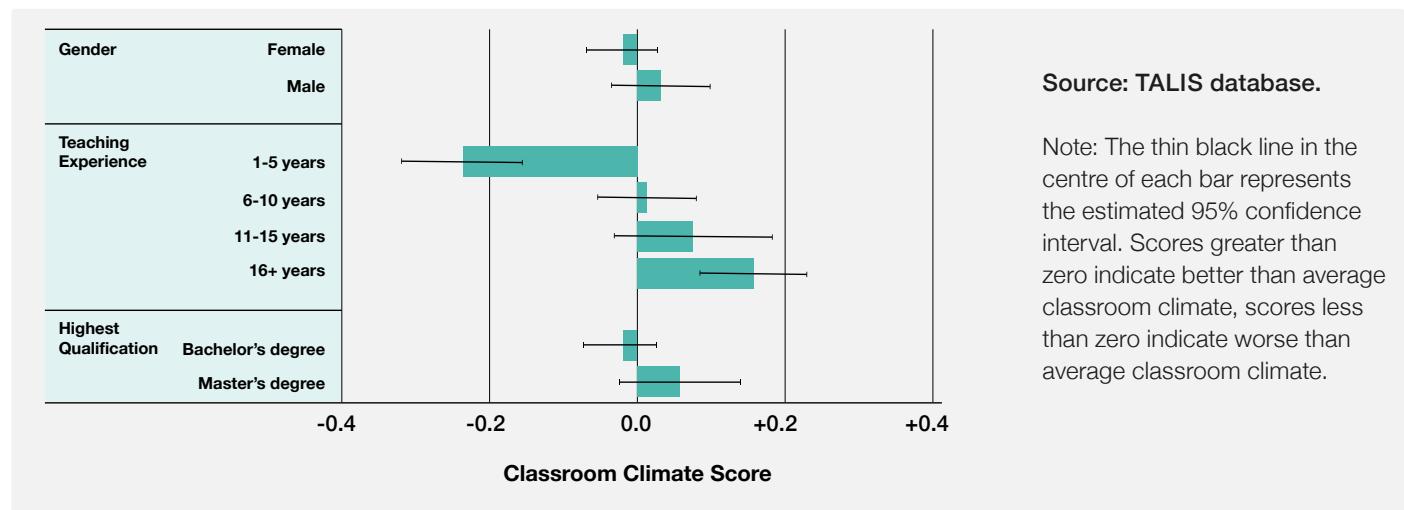
Training teachers in classroom management practices can improve pupil behaviour in the classroom—and not just for those pupils most likely to misbehave. There are several programmes that schools can buy 'off the shelf' to improve classroom management and the evidence suggests these should improve classroom behaviour, particularly in classrooms with above average levels of disruption.

## Which staff might need most support?

Classroom management tends to be more of a problem for teachers earlier in their careers than for those with more experience. The OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is a regular (5 yearly) survey of teachers and headteachers across over 40 countries which focuses on teaching practices and the working conditions of teachers and their

headteachers. Figure 4 from the 2013 TALIS report in secondary schools demonstrates that while there is no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers or those with and without a Master's degree, there is a substantial improvement in classroom climate associated with being in the profession longer than five years.

**Figure 4: Average classroom climate score, by characteristics of the teacher**



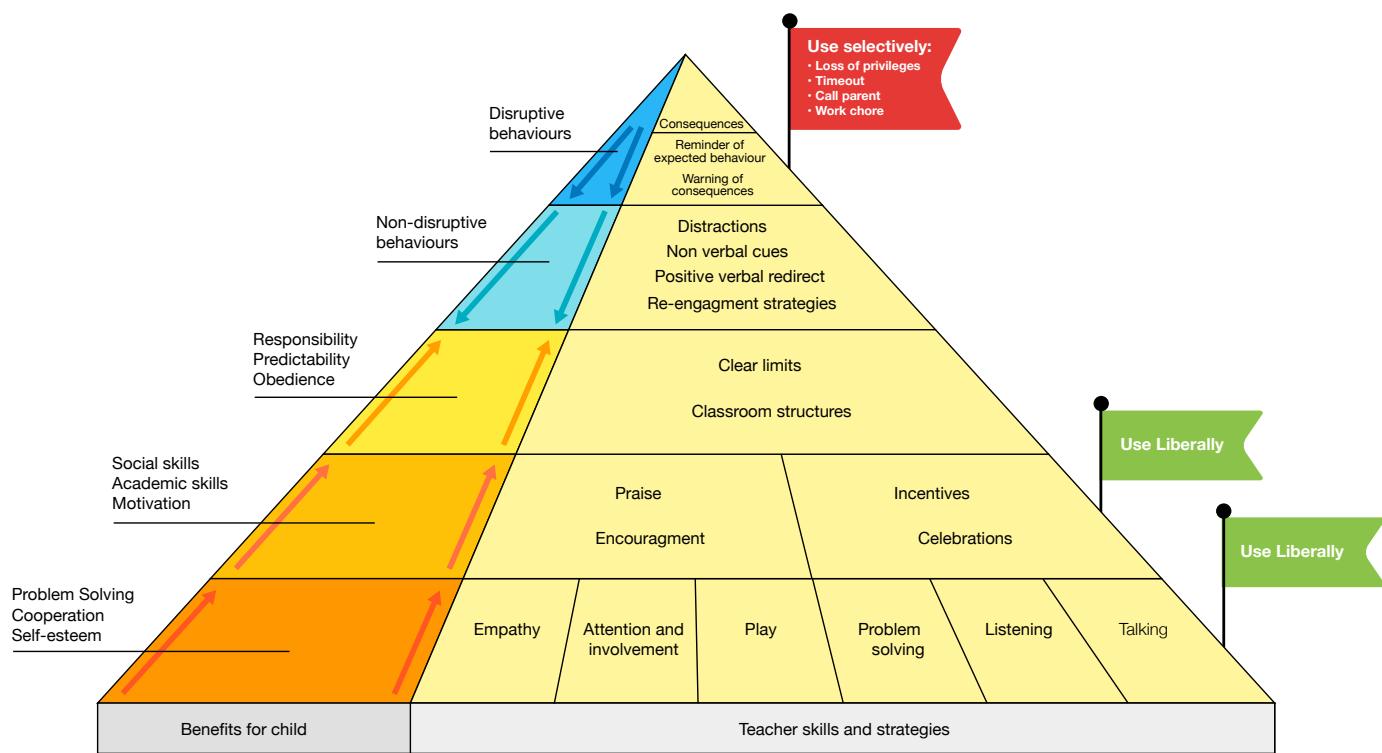
Early career teachers should understand that:

- it is normal for them to have more issues with behaviour management in their classroom than more experienced colleagues; it is okay to ask for help;
- even the most experienced teachers implementing universal classroom management strategies will find they do not work for all pupils all the time;
- some students will need a more tailored approach (see Recommendation 5) which may require reflection and adapting to the situation; and
- what works for one teacher might not work for another with the same pupil: it may take a while to find the right strategy and it may help to ask a range of colleagues about their approaches.

## Box 5: Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management

Several high-quality studies suggest that *Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management (TCM)* can have a positive effect on pupil behaviour. The TCM programme is part of a suite of programmes for children, parents, and teachers ([www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com)). This programme aims to provide teachers of 3-8-year-olds with the skills to effectively manage their classroom and promote children's social, emotional, and academic competence. The focus is on strengthening teachers' **classroom management strategies, promoting children's prosocial behaviour, and reducing children's classroom aggression** and non-cooperation with peers and teachers. The programme also helps teachers work with parents to support their school involvement and promote consistency between home and school. Teachers attend a full-day training session each month for six months using collaborative learning, discussions of staff's own experiences, and group work to find solutions to problems encountered in the classroom.

**Figure 5: The Incredible Years Teaching Pyramid®**



Adapted from Webster-Stratton, C. and Reid, M. J. (2001) *Incredible Years Teacher Training Program: Content, Methods and Processes* (Facilitator Manual), Seattle.



# 4 Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine



*'Many problems—or behaviors—that affect wellbeing do not require lengthy or complex interventions involving consultations, workshops, training, or support'<sup>34</sup>*

**Dennis Embry and Anthony Biglan, 2008**

While perfecting your school's approach to behaviour is likely to require training, external expertise, and coordination across the school (see Recommendations 3, 5, and 6), some strategies that do not require complex pedagogical changes have been shown to be promising. The message here is not to overlook simple things done well, such as:

- starting the day with a free breakfast club;
- greeting each student positively at the door;
- giving specific behaviour-related praise throughout the lesson;

- using simple approaches to improve teacher-student relationships (see Recommendation 2); and
- using checklists to ensure behaviour policies and procedures are embedded with rigour.

Most of these strategies have little or no cost, yet the research suggests that they could reduce challenging behaviour and lead to improved attainment, improved attendance, and a more purposeful learning climate.

## Breakfast clubs

The EEF 'Magic Breakfast' research showed that pupil behaviour and attainment improved for schools that ran a breakfast club. Interestingly, it appeared that it was not whether more pupils ate breakfast that made the difference, as a similar number of children in the classes reported eating breakfast at the end of the study as at the beginning. It may be that school breakfasts are more nutritious or that attending the club effectively prepares pupils for learning.

While around 25% of children attended the clubs, schools that ran a breakfast club saw an improvement

in attainment across the class. Teachers reported improved behaviour in their classrooms, suggesting that breakfast clubs provide an opportunity to improve outcomes for all children, not just those who attend a breakfast club, through better classroom environments.

Schools should consider breakfast clubs as a cost-effective way to raise pupil attainment. Schools wishing to achieve an impact equivalent to two months' additional progress should aim to deliver a breakfast club similar to the model tested by the EEF: free, universal, and before school.



## Box 6: Positive greetings at the door and the 5:1 ratio

Several 'pro-active' behaviour approaches aim to improve behaviour by reinforcing positive behaviours, prior to negative behaviours occurring. Some of these strategies are interwoven into classroom management programmes, which can be very effective but require substantial teacher training in order to ensure fidelity. Some pro-active approaches, however, are much simpler to implement. Below is a summary of two easily implemented 'behaviour kernel'-based approaches with very small-scale but promising results.



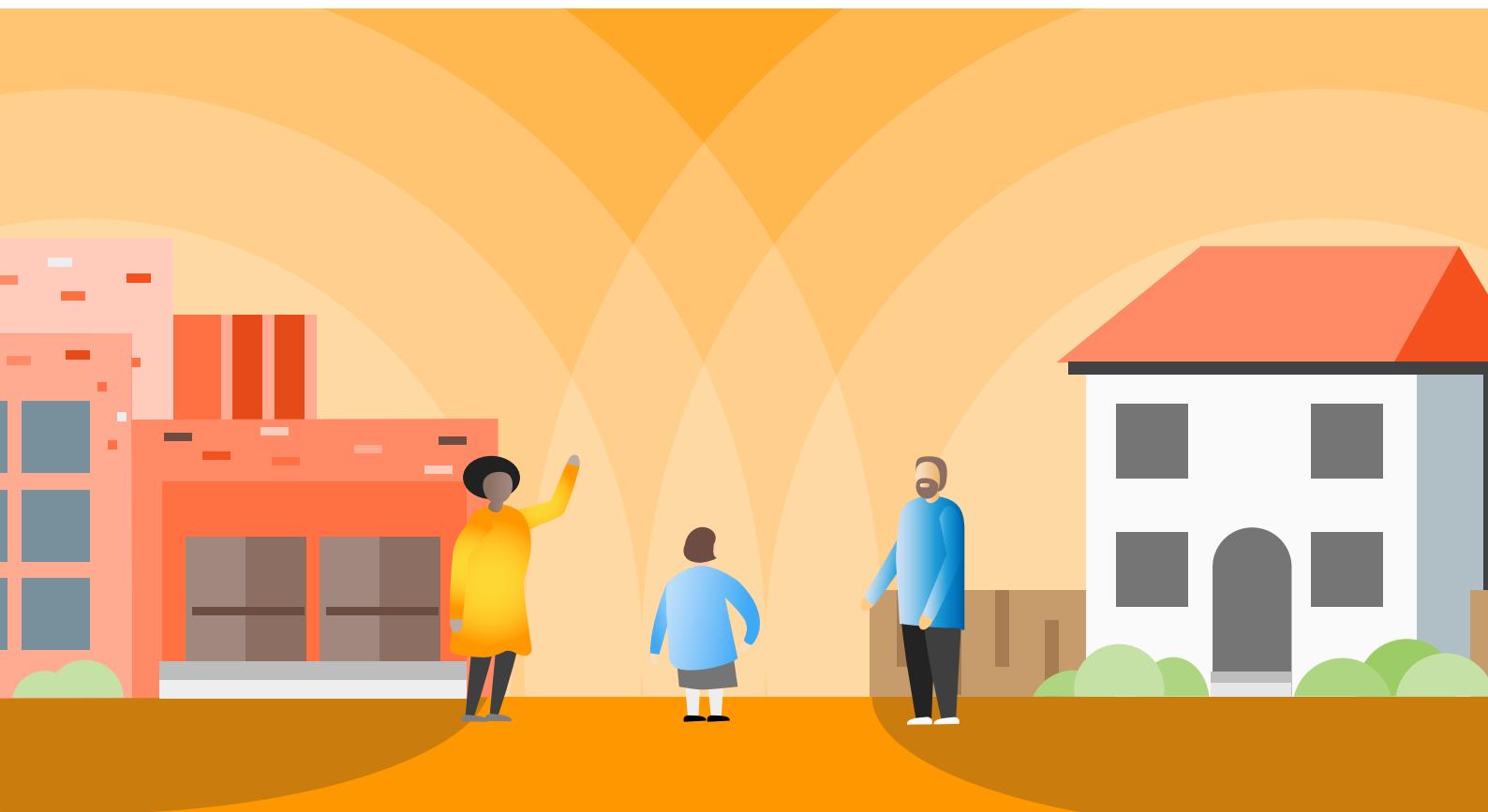
Recent research conducted with 11-14 year-olds suggests that greeting students positively at the classroom door is not only very low cost but has a high yield in terms of improving pupil behaviour in the classroom.<sup>35</sup> Misbehaviour often occurs in schools around the start and end of lessons and when moving around the school building. By intentionally promoting and practising successful transitions into the classroom, teachers are empowered to help their students to be ready to learn. When delivered consistently, greeting pupils at the classroom door can help teachers to positively and personally connect with each student, deliver 'pre-corrective' statements to remind students of class expectations, and deliver behaviour-specific praise. This strategy can be delivered by an individual teacher, but in secondary school in particular, there is likely to be an additional advantage to consistency at whole-school level.

In another promising study, teachers in disruptive classes of pupils aged between 9 and 14 years old were trained over two 45-minute sessions to increase their use of behaviour-specific praise. Teachers were given reminders at intervals to praise students, alongside training focused on the 'magic 5:1 ratio' of positive-to-negative interactions. The 5:1 ratio theory is that for every criticism or complaint the teacher issues, they should aim to give five specific compliments, approval statements and positive comments or non-verbal gestures. This ratio has been shown to be key to long-lasting marriages and has been explored in other fields, such as medicine and business. Several interventions focusing on positive approaches to behaviour in classrooms promote this idea, but this research was the first experimental study to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of the approach. Over the two-month study, pupils increased their on-task behaviour by an average of 12 minutes per hour (or an hour per day), while pupils in similar comparison classes did not change their behaviour. This study implies that teachers with disruptive classes could benefit from increasing their positive interactions with pupils.

## Working with parents to gain consistency

Particularly where behaviour is an issue for a child, involving other stakeholders—in particular their parents—can strengthen the impact of any intervention put in place. The EEF's guidance report, [\*'Working with parents to support children's learning'\*](#) is a good place to begin for guidance on involving parents in tailored strategies.

Promising approaches involve parents and teachers setting goals for their child, agreeing and implementing specific strategies that can be implemented at home and school to help their child's behaviour, responding consistently to children's behaviour, and gathering information to assess their child's progress.





## Where's the evidence?



There is a substantial and growing evidence base relating to 'behaviour kernels': behaviour influence techniques for ensuring an orderly classroom and a harmonious school culture that, if implemented with fidelity, should change behaviour. These 'kernels' could aim to reinforce positive behaviours, such as a **headteacher lottery**, where token rewards for positive behaviour are linked to random rewards from the headteacher at the end of the week. Alternatively, they could be used to discourage unwanted behaviours, such as **positive practice** (or 'overcorrection'), where pupils repeat the correct behaviour when they have acted inappropriately – for example if a child walked down a silent corridor noisily, they might be asked to walk down the corridor again silently. The greatest impact on improving behaviour with simple strategies is seen in classrooms with high rates of disruptive and inattentive behaviour but there is potential for strategies implemented consistently across the school to see bigger changes.

Some of the research is small-scale or not UK-specific. More studies are needed to ensure that teachers and headteachers can make informed decisions about simple strategies to implement.

## Box 7: Charlie Taylor's checklists

Charlie Taylor was a government expert adviser for behaviour and gathered the views of several headteachers of outstanding schools in deprived areas. He found that their approach to improving behaviour was similar: do the simple things well with consistency. After reading a book by a surgeon who had implemented simple checklists in hospital to be read aloud prior to surgery to avoid infections, he decided the same could be done for improving behaviour. He refers to the lists as a 'menu' to choose from. See **Appendix I**.

### First stop for further reading

Dennis Embry and Anthony Biglan (2008), '*Behaviour kernels: fundamental units of behavioural influence*' Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review 11:75–113.

*Behaviour kernels are simpler, easier to implement actions to change behaviour. Whilst the research literature is not as strong in all areas, these strategies have the advantage of being easier to try out, with the effect (or lack thereof) often seen more quickly than with more complex programmes. This paper describes 52 behaviour kernels with links to research surrounding them.*

Institute for Fiscal Studies and National Children's Bureau (2016), '*Magic Breakfast: evaluation report and executive summary*'. <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/magic-breakfast/>

*The report from an evaluation funded by the EEF into the effect of universal, before-school breakfast clubs run by charity Magic Breakfast. You can also check if you are eligible for funding by contacting Magic Breakfast at <https://www.magicbreakfast.com/>*

# 5 Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school



*'A flexible but consistent approach is not a soft option and requires considerable resilience in the adults who are trying to support and teach young people immersed in their own difficulties'* <sup>36</sup>

**John Cornwall, 2015**

Recommendations 1–4 focused on structuring the school and classroom such that unwanted behaviours are less likely to occur. However, universal systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all students. For those pupils who need more intensive support with their behaviour, a personalised approach is recommended. This may involve targeted interventions implemented by trained teachers; teachers reflecting on their classroom management techniques for the whole class may also be particularly beneficial for the individuals with greater needs. For pupils who are disruptive, targeted

interventions are often most effective when adapted to the needs of the individuals involved.

However, a tailored approach to support an individual's behaviour should complement the school's behaviour policy without lowering expectations of any pupil's behaviour. The research behind Ofsted's latest inspection framework warns against 'expectancy effects': low expectations communicated from teachers can detrimentally affect pupils' achievements. Furthermore, children and particularly adolescents have a heightened awareness of fairness: they are unlikely to respond well to differential treatment.

***"A tailored approach to support an individual's behaviour should complement the school's behaviour policy."***

## Targeted approaches benefit from tailoring

There is a wide range of interventions that may improve aspects of school behaviour, including those already covered under other areas of EEF focus—examples include social and emotional learning, parental engagement, and self-regulation (see further reading below). Other areas which may be effective for individuals include programmes to encourage physical activity, support to improve social skills, and interventions to reduce specific types of unwanted behaviour.

It is notable that the interventions found to have a positive effect on behaviour largely focused on positive responses to the challenge of misbehaviour—training teachers to positively encourage learning behaviours and putting in place reward systems—rather than primarily focusing on punitive measures. The interventions tended not to be radically different from the pro-active interventions detailed in recommendations 1–4, just more intensive or more targeted.

## Programme types with positive outcomes

Additional programmes may be put in place for pupils who are struggling with behaviour or in classes where behaviour is particularly poor. Large effects were seen for both:

- functional behavioural assessment interventions, and
- programmes using daily report cards.

**Functional behavioural assessments** involve shared training and collaborative decision-making between in-school staff and other key external bodies such as a social worker or speech therapist. Observation is used to learn about the reasons for a pupil's behaviour including any triggers for challenging behaviour. For example, an assessment by the teacher might conclude that a particularly disruptive child's behaviour is attention-seeking. A school counsellor could speak with the student to confirm. The school team could then decide how to change the attention the pupil gets in class to encourage better behaviour. While effective, this approach can be time-consuming, but the individual techniques may be useful in isolation: identify the challenging behaviours, the triggers and the previous strategies used; decide a positive behavioural strategy to adopt; set goals, benchmarks and responsibilities; implement and monitor progress; summarize and evaluate outcomes.

## Where's the evidence?

Evidence for targeted interventions comes from 25 targeted studies, including 15 RCTs. Most of the research available is based in primary school settings: there is a need for more research on targeted interventions in secondary school settings.

Targeted programmes tend to demonstrate a bigger effect on behaviour outcomes compared to whole-class or whole-school programmes—this is to be expected as pupils are generally selected because they need specific support. However, targeted approaches have less consistent results than universal approaches, with studies varying from reporting no effect to very large effects.

**Daily report cards** are usually completed once or twice daily by the class teacher in a primary school, or carried to each class and completed by all class teachers in secondary. The teacher reports against key behaviour targets set in relation to the individual child's improvement needs (an example target could be, 'Paid attention in class'). These report cards aim to improve communication between the child and adults surrounding them about the child's behaviour.

In both cases, these interventions were to some extent tailored to the behavioural needs of individual children.

## SEND and behaviour

While pupils with behavioural issues might need a tailored approach, they do not necessarily have a special educational need. Similarly, children with special educational needs and disabilities will not necessarily need additional support with their behaviour. If you know that a pupil who has behavioural issues also has a special educational need, understanding best practice for supporting that particular need may help with their behaviour and thus could be a good starting point for their behaviour support.

*"Targeted programmes tend to demonstrate a bigger effect on behaviour outcomes compared to whole-class or whole-school programmes"*

## One school's approach: understanding pupils and tailoring support

St Mary's Catholic School in Blackpool utilises several recommendations from this report and several 'best bet' strategies as part of a tailored response to pupil behaviour. Upon entry to St Mary's, all Year 7 pupils complete the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) survey from GL Assessment, which gives the school an indication of pupil attitudes across nine areas including self-regard and feelings about school.<sup>37</sup> The pastoral team scrutinise all available information from the child's primary school and the local police (through the school's Police Community Support Officer) to establish an estimated ACE score (Adverse Childhood Experiences score) which is updated whenever the school becomes aware of new issues.<sup>38</sup> They also perform a diagnostic and liaise with Learning Support if any further assessments are required.

Form tutors are given specific training on the 2x10 model to positively engage pupils from their first meeting. Based on similar principles to the EMR method outlined in Recommendation 1, the 2x10 model focuses on spending 2 minutes of non-school-related conversation with target pupils for 10 days to try and form a relationship, establishing a

human connection beyond the usual learning focus of the school. This interaction can support learning conversations further down the line and creates a supportive relationship that may help a pupil speak up about issues they have in and beyond school. Teachers are also encouraged to call home for as many pupils as possible, for positive reasons as well as when they have a concern, developing the relationship with the family around the pupil.

The school's behaviour manager then looks at the 'need' from the information available and creates a 'roadmap' of intervention from the broad range available (see Table 2). This roadmap will look to strategically develop what intervention is required to target the main need. It will also consider 'the next step' if the intervention works or fails.

This support will then occur weekly (or more frequently if the need is greater). Support follows a structured path so that the student has clarity about expectations such as designated collection times, designated room. The intervention will typically run for 3-6 weeks depending on need.



**Table 2: Interventions at St Mary's Catholic School**

Internal	Learning Support Department	Life Coach	Family liaison worker	Behaviour Management	Chaplaincy	LAC co-ordinator	External
Nurse PSP Lite	Assessment (screening)	Life Coach 1:1 Support	Assessment of needs	Listening and communication	1 to 1	Paid 1 to 1 Mentor	Womens Refuge
PSP	Targeted Withdrawal Intervention		Youth mediation service (y11)	Breaking Habits	Rainbows/ Boys' group	HeadStart Referral	Youth Therapy
Link - internal	Educational Psychology Involvement		Family mediation - parent to child	Positive Attitude	Councelling	Financial Assistance	CAMHS
Managed Move			Family liaison	Managing feelings & behaviour		Academy Extra	FIN
Education welfare officer	Person-Centred Planning Approach		Attendance support	Self Esteem			CIN
Part Time Timetable	KS4 Mentoring		Referral to external agency	Self Awareness			CP
Early Help Form L2	Shared in-class support		1:1 with pupil	Social Skills			WISH / AWAKEN
Lexonics	Exam Access Arrangements		Financial Assistance	Handling Anger			Resilience Coaches
				Reintegration			The Link (Grange)
				Retracking			CASHER
				Skills for School			Aspired Futures
				Planning for personal development			Young Carers
				Resilience			NSPCC
				Interpersonal/ Self Management			
				Teamwork			
				Participation & Exercise			
				One Page Profiles			

#### First stop for further reading

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/>

EEF guidance reports on: working with parents to support children's learning, teaching assistants, meta-cognition, and self-regulation.

Angela Watson, 'The 2x10 strategy: a miraculous solution for behavior issues?'

<https://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/the-2x10-strategy-a-miraculous-solution-for-behavior-issues/>

In this blog, American teacher Angela Watson reflects on teachers' experiences of using the 2x10 strategy.

# 6 Consistency is key



*"It is reasonably straightforward to identify what a good culture might look like, but like a diet, the difficulty lies in embedding and maintaining it. This includes staff training, effective use of consequences, data monitoring, staff and student surveys and maintaining standards."*

**Tom Bennett, 2017**

***"Only a quarter of secondary and half of primary teachers agreed that the behaviour policy in their school was applied consistently."***

- Are all staff trained, including teaching assistants, receptionists, lunchtime staff, and everyone else who interacts with children?
- Is there a sense of shared responsibility among staff and ideally students too, or is this new policy going to feel 'done to' the school community by leadership?
- Are those in the wider school community (beyond the SLT and teachers) involved?
- What impact will you see in school if this strategy is successful? How do you plan to measure this?
- When would you expect to see an impact? Is it feasible for this approach be left in place until then, or will changes be made that will blur the outcome? If so, is now the right time to implement the strategy?

Considering research evidence is important, but as there is not robust evidence in every field, there are decisions school leaders need to make that the

While classroom-level strategies have a big impact on pupil behaviour, consistency and coherence are paramount at a whole-school level.

It is helpful to consider the extent to which whole-school approaches to behaviour interventions fit frameworks for whole-school approaches more broadly:

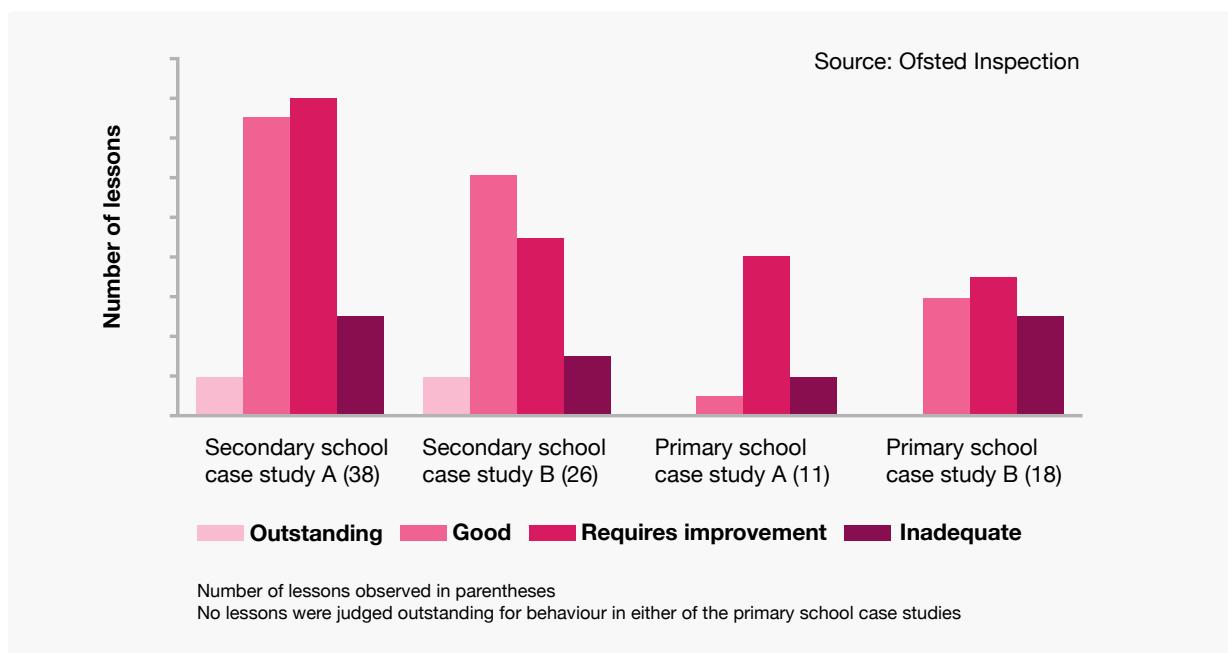
research literature cannot help with. Where evidence gaps exist—for example related to the use of isolation rooms, which are commonly used but do not appear to have been robustly evaluated to date—a useful framework for school leaders to consider involves assessing the effectiveness of their particular approach against the outcomes they are aiming to achieve as well as any unintended consequences.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, leaders need to consider whether a strategy that has been shown as promising from research can be implemented in their setting, with the expectation that it can be put in place consistently and with similar results. Your school's context will affect your choices, and continuous assessment of how policies are working can ensure you deploy the most successful strategies.

As Figure 6 shows, even in schools where behaviour is judged by Ofsted to be inadequate overall, the behaviour in most classrooms is not inadequate. This should be treated as good news: even if behaviour is an urgent priority in your school, it is likely that on any given day, many lessons are not being disturbed by poor behaviour. It is likely you already have staff in your team who are behaviour experts and that they could share examples of what works for them with other staff.

The same report revealed that only a quarter of secondary and half of primary teachers agreed that the behaviour policy in their school was applied consistently by all staff. Only a third of all teachers said the headteacher provided support in managing behaviour. School leaders can support their teachers and middle leaders to achieve better consistency between the classrooms in their school, and any new strategies should aim towards this.

**Figure 6: Number of behaviour judgements from lessons in two secondary and two primary school inspections in 2014 where ‘behaviour and safety was judged to be inadequate overall. (From ‘Below the Radar’)<sup>39</sup>**



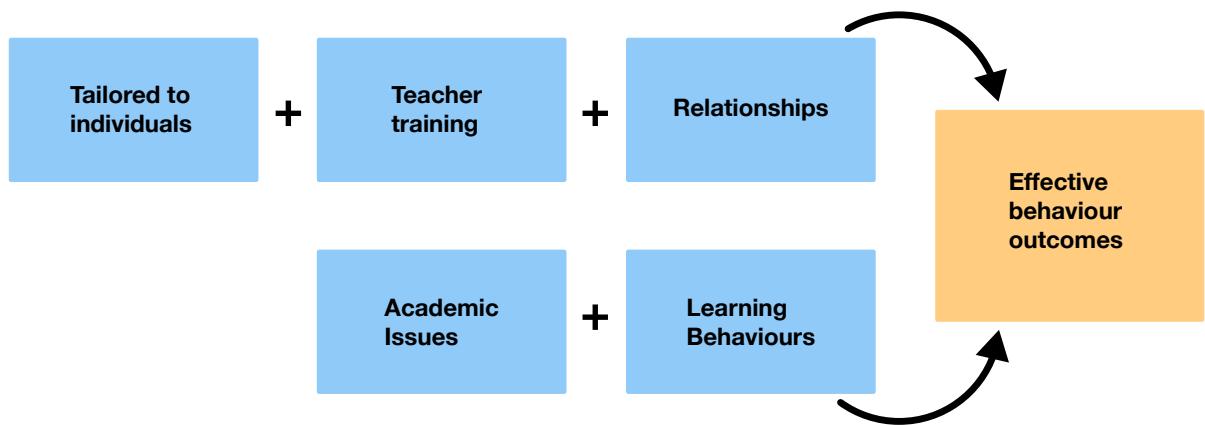
#### Box 8: Zero tolerance / no excuses

Zero tolerance behaviour policies, sometimes described as “no excuses”, aim to create a strict and clear whole-school approach to discipline. Typically, under such policies, pupils will automatically receive detentions for a range of misbehaviours such as being late, forgetting homework or using rude language. Other more serious conduct, such as bringing a weapon to school, may result in exclusion – without exception.

Advocates of zero tolerance approaches include some successful leaders within the charter school movement in the United States, who regard zero tolerance approaches as key contributors to improving the outcomes of pupils in areas of high disadvantage.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, some have criticised the use of zero tolerance, with MPs on the Education Select Committee in England expressing concern that such policies may be linked to unnecessary exclusions.<sup>42</sup>

To date, very few robust studies have assessed the impact of zero tolerance policies on pupil outcomes, and no high-quality studies have been completed in English schools. It would be valuable to conduct more rigorous evaluations. However, in the absence of such studies, the wider evidence base may help schools considering whether to change any aspect of their behaviour policy. For example, providing training for teachers in classroom management and having a consistent approach across the school that can be adapted for some pupils with specific needs are likely to improve behaviour within zero tolerance or alternative approaches.

**Figure 7: Pathways to effectiveness from QCA findings**



### **Consider combinations of strategies that are more powerful together**

When deciding which behaviour approaches to adopt as part of your school's behaviour strategy, it may be helpful to consider combining two intervention approaches which are supported by evidence:

- tailor approaches to individual pupils, focus on improving relationships, and include intensive teacher training (over 20 hours); and
- focus on academic issues, teaching coping and resilience skills (separate from any efforts to improve relationships).

As shown in Figure 7, tailoring approaches to individuals and focusing on building relationships can be effective, but this needs to occur with an appropriate amount of teacher training. An alternative is to focus on academic issues and teaching learning behaviours (described in Recommendation 2), but not focus on relationships. This might be interpreted as a response to behaviour that is more focused on individual student responsibility for behaviour and academic goals.

## Implement whole-school approaches strategically to see sustained change

Whatever approaches you adopt, they will need time to embed. Implementation of whole-school programmes can be slower and take more sustained coordination to see a change. Implementing such changes will require longer-term planning and monitoring.

When assessing the success of a school-wide behaviour initiative, school leaders should consider:

- the aims of the initiative;
- the realistic rate and scale of change expected; and
- anticipated pressure points: times or situations when maintaining the change may become difficult.

Behaviour approaches usually have a behavioural outcome as their primary aim: to reduce disruptive behaviour in lessons, for example, or to increase respectful behaviour in the playground. Attainment outcomes may be expected to follow, particularly with approaches that reduce disruption in lessons. Whole-school approaches can promote inclusion, improve school culture, engender positive role models, and clarify organisational principles, ultimately improving the school for staff as well as pupils; thus a comprehensive behaviour strategy might, in time, expect to see an impact on wide-ranging measures such as pupil and staff attendance and wellbeing.<sup>43</sup>

**Appendix II** (Implementation logic model) demonstrates the high-level implementation logic model a school might construct when implementing changes to their behaviour policy. In this logic model, you can see a process spanning an academic year involving the whole school to ensure school staff and pupils take ownership of the new policy. This is a complex change, but even relatively simple changes such as a change to mobile phone policy are likely to benefit from careful implementation, wide consultation, and room for adaptation through iterative feedback. Any change to a behaviour policy in your school is, by its nature, calling for behavioural change, whether in a targeted group of pupils, all pupils, staff, or a combination of these.

Whether implementing a new rewards and sanctions system or moving towards using a redistributive justice approach to respond to behaviour incidents, teacher and pupil behaviours become ingrained and can be difficult to change, so most whole-school behaviour policy or practice change will likely take more than a school term to demonstrate impact. The logic model demonstrated in **Appendix II** would provide a discussion framework for senior leaders. It would be supplemented with individual plans and even logic models for components of this complex whole-school change.

*“Even relatively simple changes are likely to benefit from careful implementation, wide consultation and iterative feedback.”*

## Enhance the effects of universal, whole-school approaches by considering how these interact with targeted approaches you employ.

Public Health England provides a model of elements of a whole-school approach for wellbeing interventions (Figure 8) which may be of relevance in considering whole-school approaches to behaviour. Each element needs considering by school leadership. It may be helpful to discuss as a leadership team:

- Which elements is our school performing strongly in?
- Which elements do we need to work on?
- Are there any elements where we are unsure of our performance? What might we need to do to have enough information on how we are performing?

**Figure 8: Elements of a whole-school approach for wellbeing interventions (PHE 2015)<sup>44</sup>**



## Case Study: Wilbraham Primary School in Fallowfield, Manchester



Headteacher Steve Wheeldon gives out 'Headteacher Star' stickers every Friday. Steve visits all classrooms and asks each teacher and teaching assistant to publicly select a child for praise. If the reason they give is work-related, Steve asks to see the work and the chosen pupil is also given a sticker for their book.

Students are issued raffle tickets for good deeds throughout the week, and these are all put into a pot for a 'pocket-money prize' once a week, so more raffle tickets mean more chance of winning.

Steve's policy draws on a number of high-potential strategies:

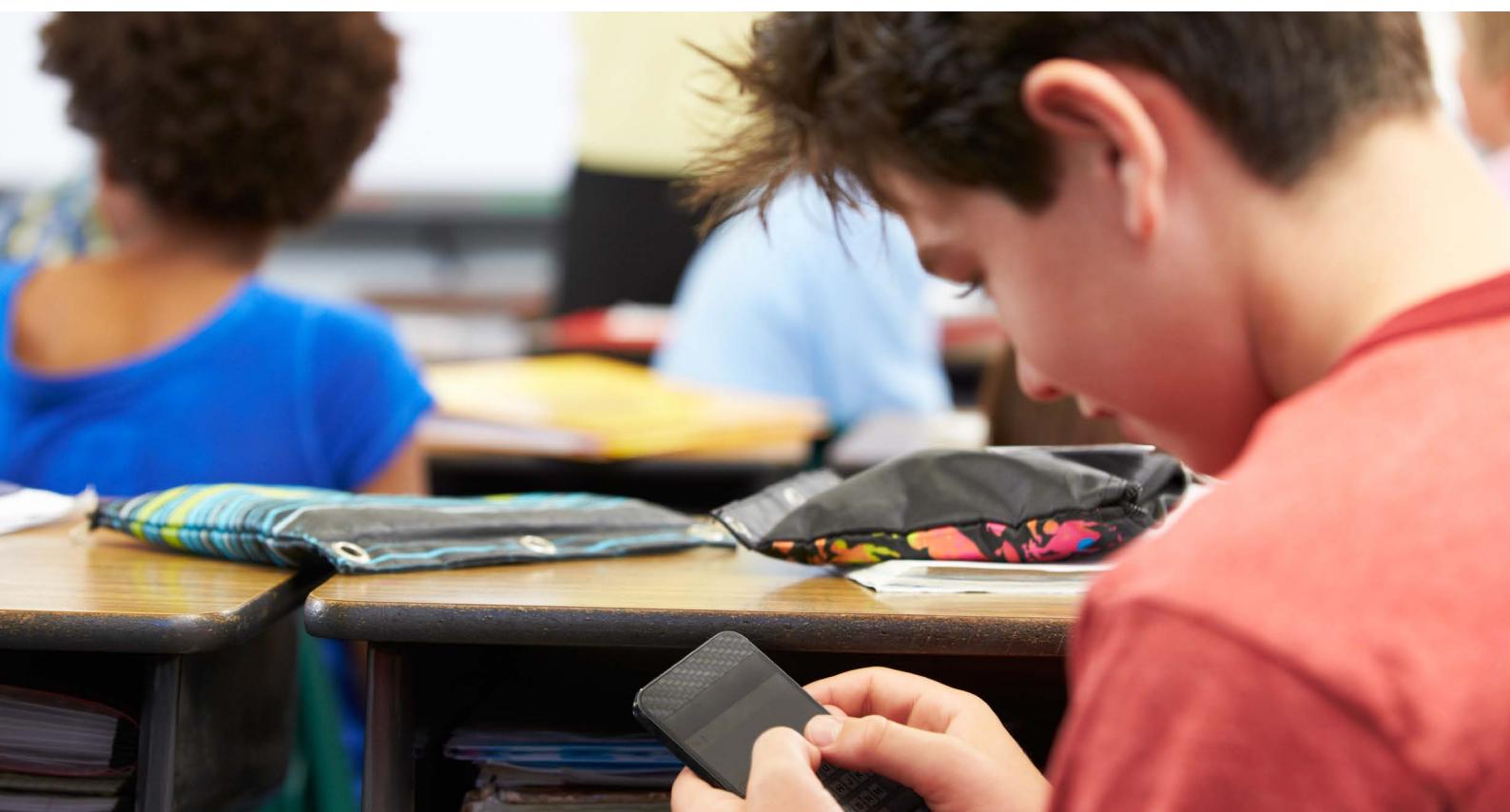
- Reinforcing good behaviour with public praise
- Sharing the job of selecting reward winners with all staff in the school, demonstrating a united approach to the children
- Prizes are worth no value (stickers) or low value (pocket money prizes) and are not guaranteed, preventing an over-reliance on extrinsic motivation
- Ensuring children feel their work is seen and that work in books should be their best

### Box 8: Mobile phone usage

Mobile phones are often linked to behaviour incidents, from pupils being sanctioned for using their phone during class to their link to bullying incidents over social media. Many schools are limiting mobile phone use to improve behaviour and refocus pupils on their learning – indeed, mobile phones will shortly be banned in all schools in France. But what does the evidence say?

In 2015, the Centre for Economic Performance published a paper investigating the effects of mobile phone bans in schools. The research team surveyed schools in four cities in England on their mobile phone usage and compared this with their national test data. They found that pupils performed better in high-stakes exams following a mobile phone ban within a school, with improvements particularly seen from the lowest-attaining pupils, as long as pupils were compliant with the ban.

The results suggest restricting mobile phone use could improve attainment results. However, they should be interpreted with some caution. Firstly, the data is correlational and doesn't show a mobile phone ban caused the change in attainment. Secondly, high compliance with a mobile phone ban implies a well-implemented policy. It may be the way the policy was implemented, or indeed other policies implemented at the same time, which caused the change, as a mobile phone ban is often part of wider changes. Ultimately, school leaders need to make decisions based on their context, but careful implementation of any change is likely to affect how it is received by pupils and thus how effective it is at changing behaviour and attainment outcomes.





## Where's the evidence?

Among behaviour interventions, those at whole-school level more consistently improve attainment outcomes. The effects of whole-school approaches on behaviour and learning outcomes tend to be smaller and take longer to emerge than in classroom-based approaches.<sup>45</sup> This is to be expected, particularly given the difference in the level of disruption between classrooms in most schools: improving behaviour across the school may not have much of an effect on the lessons where behaviour was already good, but that does not mean the policy is not working. The effect of a whole-school approach can be enhanced when deployed in combination with targeted additions and modifications for pupils who consistently struggle to meet the standard set by the approach.<sup>46</sup>

### First stop for further reading

*Putting Evidence to Work - A School's Guide to Implementation*  
<https://eef.li/implementation/>

*The EEF guidance report on implementation is a key document for school leaders implementing any strategic change.*

Valdebenito, Eisner, Farrington, Ttofi, and Sutherland (2018), 'School-based interventions for reducing disciplinary school exclusion: a systematic review', Campbell Systematic Reviews

<https://campbellcollaboration.org/library/reducing-school-exclusion-school-based-interventions.html>

Edward Timpson (2019), 'Timpson review of school exclusion', Department for Education  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799979/Timpson\\_review\\_of\\_school\\_exclusion.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799979/Timpson_review_of_school_exclusion.pdf)

*This guidance report focuses on approaches to reduce behaviour incidents and support pupils to behave well. School leaders also need to make difficult decisions regarding consequences when serious misbehaviour occurs. The texts above provide support with considering an appropriate response. Most exclusions, whether fixed-term or permanent, are for behaviour-based reasons. The Campbell systematic review (2018) on exclusions exposes the differential rates at which children and young people aged 4-18 from different backgrounds are excluded from schools and reviews evidence for various interventions schools may use to reduce their exclusion rates. The more recent Timpson review focuses in on practice in schools in England, the reasons behind it and policy changes that could improve conditions for pupils at risk of exclusion, including a new government commitment to address poor behaviour in schools.*

Lavis & Robson (2015), 'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach', Public Health England  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/414908/Final\\_EHWB\\_draft\\_20\\_03\\_15.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWB_draft_20_03_15.pdf)

*Public Health England's publication incorporates the model above and guidance for school leaders.*

Cat Scutt (2019), 'Banning Mobile Phones in Schools: Reflecting on the Debate'  
<https://impact.chartered.college/article/banning-mobile-phones-schools-reflecting-debate/>

*Cat Scutt considers the evidence on mobile phone usage in a blog for the Chartered College of Teaching. This may provide a useful springboard for discussion for school stakeholders contemplating a change in policy.*

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\* Denotes that the source for reference is the evidence review feeding into this guidance report, which was conducted by a team at Exeter University and is due to be made public in September 2019.

# HOW WAS THIS GUIDANCE COMPILED?

This guidance report was written by Igraine Rhodes (EEF) and Michelle Long (Dixons Music Primary). It draws on the best available evidence regarding behaviour in schools, based on a series of evidence reviews conducted by Dr Darren Moore and his team at the University of Exeter.

The guidance report was created over three stages.

**1. Scoping.** The process began with a consultation with teachers, academics, and other experts, including visits to several schools. The EEF team appointed an Advisory Panel and evidence review team and agreed research questions for the evidence review. The Advisory Panel consisted of both expert teachers and academics.

**2. Evidence reviews.** The evidence review team conducted searches for the best available international evidence on three areas relating to behaviour: models for why children and young people misbehave in schools, evidence about classroom-based approaches to behaviour and evidence about school-wide approaches to behaviour.

**3. Writing recommendations.** The authors worked with the support of the Advisory Panel to draft the recommendations. Academic and teaching experts were consulted on drafts of the report.

The advisory panel included John d'Abbro OBE (New Rush Hall Group), Jane Bateman (Underwood West Academy), Prof Neil Humphrey (University of Manchester), Dr Alex Sutherland (RAND) and Jenny Thompson (Dixons Trinity Academy).

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# APPENDIX I: CHARLIE TAYLOR'S CHECKLISTS

For senior leadership team:		For teachers:	
Policy:	<p>Ensure absolute clarity about the expected standard of pupils' behaviour.</p> <p>Ensure that behaviour policy is clearly understood by all staff, parents, and pupils.</p> <p>Display school rules clearly in classes and around the building; staff and pupils should know what they are.</p>	<p>Classroom:</p> <p>Know the names and roles of any adults in class.</p> <p>Meet and greet pupils when they come into the classroom.</p> <p>Display rules in the class—and ensure that the pupils and staff know what they are.</p>	<p>Display the tariff of sanctions in class.</p> <p>Have a system in place to follow through with all sanctions.</p> <p>Display the tariff of rewards in class.</p> <p>Have a system in place to follow through with all rewards.</p>
Leadership:	<p>Model the behaviour you want to see from your staff.</p>	<p>Building:</p> <p>Visit the lunch hall and playground, and be around at the beginning and the end of the school day.</p> <p>Ensure that other Senior Leadership Team members are a visible presence around the school</p> <p>Check that pupils come in from the playground and move around the school in an orderly manner.</p> <p>Check up on behaviour outside the school.</p> <p>Check the building is clean and well-maintained.</p>	<p>Pupils:</p> <p>Know the names of children.</p> <p>Have a plan for children who are likely to misbehave.</p> <p>Ensure other adults in the class know the plan.</p> <p>Understand pupils' special needs.</p>
Staff:	<p>Know the names of all staff.</p> <p>Praise the good performance of staff.</p> <p>Take action to deal with poor teaching or staff who fail to follow the behaviour policy.</p>	<p>Teaching:</p> <p>Ensure that all resources are prepared in advance.</p> <p>Praise the behaviour you want to see more of.</p> <p>Praise children doing the right thing more than criticising those who are doing the wrong thing (parallel praise).</p> <p>Differentiate.</p> <p>Stay calm.</p> <p>Have clear routines for transitions and for stopping the class.</p> <p>Teach children the class routines.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <p>Praise good behaviour.</p> <p>Celebrate successes.</p>
Teaching:	<p>Monitor the amount of praise, rewards, and punishments given by individual staff.</p> <p>Ensure that staff praise good behaviour and work.</p> <p>Ensure that staff understand special needs of pupils.</p>	<p>Individual pupils:</p> <p>Have clear plans for pupils likely to misbehave and ensure staff are aware of them.</p> <p>Put in place suitable support for pupils with behavioural difficulties.</p> <p>Build positive relationships, particularly with parents of pupils with behaviour difficulties.</p>	<p>Parents:</p> <p>Give feedback to parents about their child's behaviour—let them know about the good days as well as the bad ones.</p>



# APPENDIX II

## BEHAVIOUR IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

Problem (Why?)	Intervention Description (What?)	Implementation Activities (How?)	Implementation Outcomes (How Well?)	Final Outcomes (And so?)
<b>Policy implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies not always being followed. There is variability and lack of consistency for staff, students and parents.</li> </ul>	<b>Leadership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff perception survey demonstrates they do not feel supported by leadership to respond effectively and consistently to behaviour incidents.</li> </ul>	<b>Active ingredient one</b> <p><i>Relevant policy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour policy makes sense to staff and pupils. It is used consistently in both culture-setting and corrective behaviour conversations.</li> <li>• Roles of different staff (class-based, leadership, pastoral team and others) are clearly defined and understood.</li> </ul>	<b>Collaborative expectation setting</b> <p><i>Leadership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the 'Creating a Culture' paper from Tom Bennett to re-establish the basics for how a leader should operate.</li> <li>• Charlie Taylor behaviour checklists used and circulated to departments.</li> <li>• External training and support provided for senior leaders using the following framework: <i>Attention to detail/ Staff engagement, Consistent practices, Visible leaders, Detailed expectations, Clarity of culture, High staff report, All students matter.</i></li> </ul>	<b>Short term (3 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils and staff demonstrate knowledge and understanding of support and consequences if they do not meet expectations.</li> <li>• QA of policy implementation demonstrates increase in consistency.</li> <li>• High needs pupils identified and targeted with tailored support; gaps in high needs provision identified.</li> <li>• Incidents logged correctly.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of coaching for staff to develop their classroom management.</li> <li>• Lack of training available to experienced staff, middle &amp; senior leaders on delivering effective coaching/mentoring sessions to support staff in dealing with behaviour.</li> </ul>	<b>Active ingredient two</b> <p><i>Empowered staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are clear on the behaviour policy and confident their colleagues, including senior leaders, will respond to incidents consistently.</li> <li>• Staff know pupils individually and understand their influences and motivations.</li> <li>• Subject and pastoral leads effectively support behaviour across departments.</li> </ul>	<b>Active ingredient three</b> <p><i>Supported students:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are clear about the expectations regarding behaviour. They know the consequences if they do not meet these.</li> <li>• Senior leaders, class teachers and pastoral team have precise and accurate information about pupils' behaviour, based on survey data and information from other stakeholders e.g. school nurse.</li> <li>• Individuals with high behaviour needs receive tailored support.</li> </ul>	<b>Training</b> <p><i>Teachers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive work around behaviour included in induction process (all staff for intro year). Provide clarity on expectations as classroom teacher, form tutor and on duty Half-termly half-days for one year.</li> <li>• Package of support to help staff who are managing difficult classes, focused on classroom management strategies; two training days per half term for 3 half terms.</li> <li>• Instructional coaching for staff who require additional support.</li> <li>• Promote HoD involvement in sorting behavioural issues, including seeking tailored training for high-needs pupils.</li> </ul> <p><i>Reach:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every student can name core 'Expectations'.</li> <li>• All staff have attended CPD and INSET regarding behaviour.</li> <li>• All most challenging students are supported through high needs provision, usually tailored.</li> </ul> <p><i>Acceptability:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff generally agree with the direction of travel regarding behaviour.</li> <li>• Reduction in the amount of exclusions for high needs students.</li> </ul>	<b>Short term (3 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'High needs' report that they feel supported when asked by behaviour leader or pastoral lead.</li> <li>• More behaviour incidents are resolved within departments, without pupils being sent to SLT.</li> </ul>
<b>Pupils</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clarity over expectations, rewards and sanctions.</li> <li>• High needs' provision for those with behavioural issues works for some pupils but not others.</li> <li>• Pupil survey shows many pupils feel disconnected from or unsupported by school.</li> </ul>	<b>Active ingredient four</b> <p><i>Monitoring:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour leader to conduct weekly QA of behaviour and pastoral processes, inviting feedback.</li> <li>• Regular Learning House meetings to discuss pastoral issues &amp; reaffirm policy.</li> <li>• Create an Incident Response process to provide clarity of roles and escalation procedures.</li> <li>• Staff opinion on SLT (via staff voice) starts to make significant improvement.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium term (6 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctions and support are consistent.</li> <li>• The language of 'Expectations' is used spontaneously by staff and pupils in conversations about behaviour and learning.</li> <li>• Middle/TLR/Senior leaders actively taking part in coaching/training sessions.</li> <li>• Internal CPD provided for leaders on how to coach.</li> </ul> <p><i>Reach:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Middle/TLR/Senior leaders.</li> <li>• All pupils assessed as 'high needs' are receiving tailored support.</li> </ul> <p><i>Acceptability:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive tailored interventions offered to pupils at risk of needing specific support with behaviour.</li> </ul>	<b>Medium term (6 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils who are classed as 'high needs' report that they feel supported when asked by behaviour leader or pastoral lead.</li> <li>• More behaviour incidents are resolved within departments, without pupils being sent to SLT.</li> </ul>	<b>Short term (3 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils understand the school rules and the behaviour expected of them.</li> <li>• There are fewer incidents of pupils challenging a staff member on their response to a behaviour incident.</li> </ul>
	<b>Long term (12 months):</b> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff experience a robust and informative induction process that provides clarity over expectations for being effective in their role.</li> </ul> <p><i>Reach:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff understand their role and access specific training.</li> </ul> <p><i>Acceptability:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback for induction programme.</li> <li>• All new staff complete induction programme. Any new staff to post holder positions also attend additional coaching/training.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Long term (12 months):</i></p> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour leader to conduct weekly QA of behaviour and pastoral processes, inviting feedback.</li> <li>• Regular Learning House meetings to discuss pastoral issues &amp; reaffirm policy.</li> <li>• Create an Incident Response process to provide clarity of roles and escalation procedures.</li> <li>• Staff opinion on SLT (via staff voice) starts to make significant improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Long term (12 months):</i></p> <p><i>Fidelity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils understand the school rules and the behaviour expected of them.</li> <li>• There are fewer incidents of pupils challenging a staff member on their response to a behaviour incident.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Final Outcomes (And so?)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils understand the school rules and the behaviour expected of them.</li> <li>• There are fewer incidents of pupils challenging a staff member on their response to a behaviour incident.</li> </ul>

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